

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-25

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NEA/ TUR: NMMURPHY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 092910

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS TU

SUBJ: HELICOPTERS FOR TURKISH JANDARMA

REF: ROME 3714

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY STABLER MAY 14, ITALIAN EMBASSY MINISTER DE BENEDICTIS SAID GOI WAS UPSET TO LEARN FROM OUR EMBASSY IN ROME ON MAY 10 THAT U. S. IS NOW CONTEMPLATING A GOVERNMENT- TO- GOVERNMENT SALE OF BELL HELICOPTERS TO TURKEY. DE BENEDICTIS RECALLED THAT THE ITALIAN FIRM AGUSTA HAD BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH THE GOT FOR A YEAR ON THE SALE OF 40 HELICOPTERS. SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, HE CONTINUED, WHEN THE GOT BEGAN SHOWING INTEREST IN U. S. HELICOPTERS, THE ITALIAN EMBASSY IN ANKARA HAD RAISED THE MATTER WITH OUR EMBASSY THERE AND AS A RESULT IT APPEARED THAT WE HAD WITHDRAWN FROM THE SALE. NOW, ON THE OTHER HAND, IT APPEARS TO THE GOI THAT WE HAVE REVERSED OUR POSITION. DE BENEDICTIS SAID HE REALIZED THE BELL/ AGUSTA

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LICENSING ARRANGEMENT CONTAINS A RESERVE CLAUSE FOR FMS SALES, BUT THIS CASE SHOULD JUSTIFY AN EXCEPTION. OTHERWISE THE WHOLE RATIONALE FOR AGUSTA/ BELL COLLABORATION IS PREJUDICED AND AGUSTA IS LIKELY TO CONSIDER ABANDONING ITS COLLABORATION WITH BELL FOR ANOTHER FIRM. DE BENEDICTIS CONCLUDED BY ASKING THAT WE RECONSIDER OUR POSITION AND SUGGESTED WE INDICATE TO THE GOT THAT THEY CONSIDER PURCHASING OTHER U. S. EQUIPMENT UNDER THE FMS ARRANGEMENT.

2. IN RESPONSE STABLER ASSURED DE BENEDICTIS THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF OUR ATTEMPTING TO UNDERCUT THE GOI ON THIS SALE; WE HAD IN FACT MADE A CONSIDERABLE EFFORT IN ANKARA TO ENCOURAGE THE GOT TO CONCLUDE THE HELICOPTER DEAL IT HAD BEEN DISCUSSING WITH THE GOI. IN SPITE OF OUR EFFORTS, THE TURKS APPARENTLY DECIDED TO BUY FROM US. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE WERE PLACED IN AN EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT POSITION, SINCE WE COULD NOT FLATLY TURN THE GOT ASIDE AND INSIST THAT THEY PURCHASE THE HELICOPTERS FROM SOMEONE ELSE. STABLER ASSURED DE BENEDICTIS THAT OUR POSITION HAD BEEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED AND THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HAD REVIEWED THE MATTER IN LIGHT OF PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI'S DISCUSSION WITH SECRETARY RICHARDSON OF THIRD COUNTRY MILITARY EQUIPMENT SALES. STABLER RECALLED THAT SECRETARY RICHARDSON HAD SAID THAT WE WOULD BE AS SYMPATHETIC AS POSSIBLE TO GOI REQUESTS, BUT THAT THERE WOULD INEVITABLY BE SITUATIONS IN WHICH WE WOULD FIND OURSELVES IN COMPETITION. IN THE LIGHT OF THE FOREGOING, WE HAD CONCLUDED THAT WE HAD NO OTHER OPTION BUT TO RESPOND TO THE GOT APPROACH, ON THE CONDITION THAT THEY SUBMIT A FORMAL JUSTIFICATION FOR NOT CONCLUDING THE SALE WITH AGUSTA -- WHICH THEY HAVE NOT AS YET DONE.

3. IN CONCLUSION STABLER SAID THAT WHILE WE ARE PREPARED TO REVIEW OUR POSITION ONCE AGAIN, WE COULD FRANKLY NOT HOLD OUT MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOI MIGHT DO WELL TO RAISE THE QUESTION ITSELF AGAIN WITH THE GOT IN ANKARA. RUSH

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